

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CARACA 05498 142313Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----061561 142322Z /61
O 142240Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2673

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 5498

EXDIS

FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

E.O. GDS
TAGS: PEPR, VE, US
SUBJECT: THE PANAMA MEETINGS: THE IMPACT OF THE "BRIEFING
PAPER LEAKS"

1. THE FOLLOWING IS OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT
OF THE "BRIEFING PAPER LEAKS" WHICH WE FORWARD AS OF POSSIBLE
INTEREST NOW, GIVEN THE IMPENDING PANAMA MEETING OF PRESIDENTS
AND THE FACT THAT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ (CAP) WILL COME TO THE
MEETINGS FRESH FROM THIS INCIDENT:

2. SUMMARY: THE LEAKS HAVE HAD A TANGIBLE IMPACT ON THE
VENEZUELAN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, BUT PROBABLY NOT A PERMANANT
ONE: THEY DAMAGED THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTY, ACCION
DEMOCRATICA, AND ITS CANDIDATE; THEY PUBLICLY EMBARRASSED CAP
AND HIS DIGNITY; AND THEY INSERTED THE USG AS A FACTOR IN THE
CAMPAIGN. NEVERTHELESS, THE EFFECT OF ALL THESE THINGS IN
VENEZUELAN DOMESTIC TERMS WILL PROBABLY NOT BE VERY LASTING.
THE LEAKS ALSO DAMAGED THE GOV'S (AND CAP'S) PERCEPTION OF, AND
CHILLED ITS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USG AND THE
EMBASSY. THIS AGAIN MAY WELL BE A PASSING PHENOMENON,
BUT UNFORTUNATELY IT IS IN THIS PRIVATE DIMENSION THAT
THE MORE LASTING EFFECTS AND DOUBTS WILL RESIDE. CAP,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 05498 142313Z

WE THINK, WILL FOR THE REST OF HIS TERM ALWAYS HARBOR A
LINGERING KERNEAL OF DOUBT ABOUT JUST HOW MUCH TO CONFIDE
OR TRUST IN THE US BUREAUCRACY AND THE DEPARTMENT
SPECIFICALLY, THOUGH HE WILL PROBABLY DIFFERENTIATE ALL
OF THIS FROM HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER WHICH HAS PROBABLY NOT BEEN AFFECTED AT ALL.
LUIS PINERUA, THE ADJ CANDIDATE, WHO HOLDS GRUDGES, WILL

NO DOUBT FEEL RESENTMENT TOWARD US, AND THAT DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR ANY INITIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US SHOULD HE BE ELECTED. CAP AND THE AD OVERREACTED AND THUS WORSENERED THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT; BUT SAYING THAT DOES NOT LESSEN THE FACT THAT THE IMPACT IS WHAT IT IS. IN SUM, EMOTION AND FUROR ARE PASSING, AND NO MAJOR PERMANENT DAMAGE APPEARS TO HAVE OCCURRED. BUT THERE WILL BE UNFORTUNATE SUBTLE AND LINGERING CHANGES IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS, COOPERATION AND TRUST. SO, THAT WHILE THINGS ARE SETTLING BACK DOWN NOW THAT THE WHIRLWIND HAS PASSED, THEY ARE COMING BACK TO REST IN NOT QUITE THE SAME POSITION OR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER AS BEFORE. END SUMMARY.

3. THE MAJOR ELEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS;

A. THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. THE FACT IS THAT WHAT THE US THINKS HAS AN ALMOST MAGICAL EFFECT IN THIS COUNTRY AND ON THE FATE OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES. MOREOVER, SINCE THE BETANCOURT-KENNEDY DAYS THE PREVAILING MYTH HAS BEEN THAT THE USG HAS ALWAYS SMILED KINGLY ON THE AD. THE BRIEFING PAPER'S ANALYSIS OF THE DOMESTIC SCENE WAS THEREFORE A SHOCK TO THE AD AND A SEVERE BLOW TO ITS PUBLIC IMAGE. THE PAPER'S DEPICTION OF LUIS PINERUA WAS PARTICULARLY CUTTING IN THE AD'S PERCEPTION (AND DOUBLY UNFORTUNATE BECAUSE IT IS WRONG--PINERUA IS TURNING OUT TO BE CONSIDERABLY THE MORE EFFECTIVE CANDIDATE AND LUIS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 05498 142313Z

HERRERA THE MORE INEFFECTUAL AND COLORLESS). THE RESULT HAS BEEN AD RESENTMENT AND PUBLIC OUTRAGE, TO AN OVERREACTIVE DEGREE. COPEI MEANWHILE IS BUSY CITING THE USG ANALYSES IN ITS PUBLIC OUTPUT AS SUPPORTING ITS POSITION AND PROSPECTS. AS A RESULT, PINERUA'S MOMENTUM WHICH WAS BEGINNING TO ROLL HAS BEEN SLOWED, AND COPEI'S CAMPAIGN WHICH WAS SPUTTERING AND STALLING HAS BEEN SPURRED FORWARD. NONE OF THIS IS LIKELY TO BE LASTING, AND THE AD JUGGERNAUT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE SLOWED FOR LONG. THE EPISODE AND THE VIEW OF THE "CARTER ADVISERS" (AS THEY ARE CALLED) SHOULD LARGELY BE FORGOTTEN IN A FEW MONTHS AS FAR AS THE VENEZUELAN PUBLIC IS CONCERNED. THE PERSONAL MEMORIES AND RESENTMENTS OF SOMEONE LIKE PINERUA WILL BE SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN.

B. CAP'S PERSONAL PRESTIGE. THE BRIEFING PAPERS PUBLICLY EMBARRASSED CAP. HE WAS PROUD OF HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE EFFECTINEVESS OF THE CLOSE RLEATIONS WITH THE USG. HE THEREFORE FELT LOSS OF PRESTIGE FROM THE PAPERS' PUBLICATION. WITH HIS HIGHLY DEVELOPED SENSE OF DIGNITY AND "FACE" SO AFFECTED, HIS CRIES OF OUTRAGE WERE THE LOUDEST; HIS EMBARRASSMENT WAS

SOMEWHAT WORSENEED BY THE FACT THAT WHILE IN HIS INITIAL OVERREACTION HE PUBLICLY QUESTIONED THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ALLEGED INFORMATION, THE DEPARTMENT'S JUNE 12 STATEMENT IN FACT PUBLICLY CERTIFIED THAT IT WAS AUTHENTIC. LINGERIN RESENTMENTS AT BEING PUBLICLY EMBARRASSED WITH HIS PARTY COHERTS AND WITH THE PUBLIC AT LARGE WILL REMAIN, ALTHOUGH HIS INITIAL FURY IS ABATING.

CM THE DIFFERENTIATION: PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE REST OF THE USG. CAP DIFFERENTIATES MARKEDLY BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE USG BUREAUCRACY. THE LATTER IS THE TARGET OF HIS IRE. WE SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT HE FEELS HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AFFECTED; INDEED, HE PROBABLY THINKS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS AS WRONGED AS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 05498 142313Z

HE WAS BY THE EPISODE. NOR ARE HIS BASIC STANDS AND POLICIES LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED. BUT HIS IMPATIENCE WITH US ON SUCH THINGS AS NICARAGUA AND THE CARIBBEAN WILL BE INTENSIFIED, AND OUR CAUTIONS WILL TEND TO BE MISINTERPRETED AS THE BUREACRACY UNDERMINING PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICIES.

D. PERSONAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE. APART FROM THE PUBLIC LEVEL OF DOMESTIC POLITICS AND PERSONAL EMBARRASSMENT, THERE IS A MORE DISTURBING--AND LASTING--SPIN-OFF TO THE LEAKS. THEIR REVELATION OF WHAT CAP (AND WE) KNEW TO BE CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGES CANNOT HELP BUT AROUSE HIS DOUBTS AS TO HOW MUCH HE CAN CONFIDE IN AND TRUST US--AT LEAST AT LEVELS BELOW PRESIDENT CARTER. IT MUST ALSO DISTURB HIM (AND THE AD) THAT THE "ADVISERS" HAVE THE PERCEPTIONS THEY APPEARED TO HAVE, BECAUSE THEY THINK THOSE WRONG AND THEREFORE THE "ADVISROS" AS NOT COMPETENT. CAP'S LONG-HELD DOUBTS ABOUT AND IRRITATION WITH THE HYDRA-HEADED NATURE OF THE USG WILL BE INTENSIFIED. WE BELIEVE THAT, FOR THE REST OF HIS TERM, CAP WILL ALWAYS HARBOR A LINGERING KERNEL OF DOUBT ABOUT THE USG AND THE EMBASSY, AND PULL HIS PUNCHES ACCORDINGLY.

PINERUA'S IS A MORE REGRETTABLE CASE. HE IS A TOUGH BATTLE-HARDENED POLITICAN--AND HE HOLDS GRUDGES. THE DENIGRATING PERSONAL COMMENT (TO A LATIN) IN THE EXCERPTS PRINTED WILL LEAVE A LARGER KERNEL OF RESENTMENT WITHIN HIM. HE WILL NOT SOON FORGET WHAT THE USG ALLEGEDLY THINKS OF HIM, AND THAT BODES NO GREAT GOOD FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP SHOULD HE BE ELECTED.

E. THE MOTIVES. THE CURRENT MOST POPULAR PARLOR GAME IN CARACAS IS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE MOTIVES FOR THE LEAK. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 CARACA 05498 142313Z

THE LEADING THEORY, PORPAGATED AND SINCERELY BELIEVED
BY THE AD, IS THAT IT WAS THE OPPOSITION PARTY'S AMERICAN
ELECTORAL ADVISERS (DAVID GARTH) WHO SOMEHOW ARRANGED
THE LEAKS. ALL THIS, TOO, WILL PASS, BUT THE UNFORTUNATE
BY-PRODUCT IS A MAJOR FEELING OF RESENTMENT BETWEEN THE
TWO PARTIES.

COMMENT: THE EMBASSY, TOO, IS PUZZLED BY MOTIVES. IF,
AS STATE 149430 SAYS, WALTE RECEIVED THE PAPERS AROUND
THE TIME OF THE MARCH VISIT, WHY DID HE NOT PUBLISH THEM
THEN WHEN THERE WAS A LINK THAT MADE SENSE? WHY PUBLISH
THEM NOW?
VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PAPERS, ELECTION CANDIDATES, SECURITY LEAKS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CARACA05498
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780249-0280
Format: TEL
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780658/aaaabxum.tel
Line Count: 188
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 32a96088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2345415
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE PANAMA MEETINGS: THE IMPACT OF THE "BRIEFING PAPER LEAKS"
TAGS: PEPR, VE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/32a96088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014